



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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County policy on transportation adopted...

COUNCIL APPROVES \$5.7 BILLION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved an ambitious and wide-ranging \$ 5.7 billion program over ten years designed to relieve traffic congestion through a combination of roads, transit, and land use.

The \$5.7 billion program, which includes \$1 billion in local County monies, is the largest transportation program adopted as County policy in the region.

The Council, which decides on transportation and land use policy for the County, drew from proposals contained in the Transportation Policy Report from the County Planning Board and from County Executive Doug Duncan's initiative – and added additional projects not contained in either.

"Our County is drowning in traffic congestion and we need to act now on those projects that can deliver immediate relief," said Council President Steve Silverman. "The Council has stepped up to the plate with \$5.7 billion dollars worth of relief in local monies – for new roads, road improvements, intersection upgrades, more buses, light rail, and for a land use policy that complements our transportation improvements."

Among the highlights, the County plan would construct 226 lane miles of additional roadway capacity in the County, upgrade and/or build 22 new bridges, add 144 new buses and increase bus operations by 50 percent over a ten-year period, add six new transit centers, construct 11 grade-separated interchanges and many intersection improvements, add express bus service, and add HOV lanes on I-270 from the I-270 West Spur south to Virginia and on I-270 north

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from Shady Grove to Frederick County.

The Council unanimously agreed to work closely with the County Executive and the County's Senate and House delegation in the coming budget year to increase local and State funding to finance the plan.

"Relief from traffic congestion does not come cheap," said Council President Silverman. "We need more County money – and we need much more money from the State. Our successful battle for more education funding this past year shows we can make things happen when we work together. Let's roll up our sleeves and start now.

"The County Executive is already putting together his budget proposal for the coming year and the Council will work with him to identify funding sources. And close cooperation with our Annapolis delegation is critical if we are to even come close to reaching the ambitious goal we've set for ourselves in adopting this \$5.7 billion package."

The County package anticipates \$ 4.7 billion in state funding for County transportation projects over ten years. By way of comparison, total state funding for the County under status quo arrangements would be expected to be \$1.6 billion over ten years. A five-cent increase in the state's gasoline tax, which has not been raised in ten years, would garner an additional \$ 100 million over ten years in direct revenue sharing from the state, with an additional \$250 million (assuming a 25 percent share for the County) in state transportation aid, for a total of \$350 million over ten years.

"This shows that we have our work cut out for us," said Council President Silverman. "Even assuming a five-cent gas tax increase and our deserved share of additional state transportation funding, we'll fall short of the \$4.7 billion needed. The County Executive's proposal required \$9.8 billion in state aid. We may be twice as realistic as he is, but it's still a big stretch."

The Council voted against including the InterCounty Connector by 5 to 3, with one recusal, citing its \$1.5 billion cost, its environmental damage, and its lack of effectiveness in alleviating traffic congestion. Even the County Executive's own figures including the ICC show traffic congestion as 10 percent worse in 2015 over present levels and show commuters spending just as much time in their vehicles as now.

The Council majority went on to urge that any State study of the ICC be fast-tracked to achieve closure as soon as possible and include prior study information when possible. It urged any study to take into consideration
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environmental, land use, and financial implications and that it not interfere with the widening of Maryland 28/198 to four lanes from Rockville to I-95. It authorized Council staff to be involved in the study process.

The Council did support major road improvements in the west, between Norbeck Road and the Shady Grove area, and in the east, along the ICC alignment from US 29 to I-95 and US 1.

As part of the policy, the Council also gave the green light to an alternative land use policy put forward by the County Planning Board that would use land use decisions to locate more jobs in the White Oak/FDA area and more housing and fewer jobs in the I-270 corridor so that more persons could have greater opportunities live closer to where they work. It would also plan for a series of transit-oriented communities near Metro stations and bolster activity in Langley Park in conjunction with planning for the Purple Line Metro.

Projections show that this land use change, together with expanded transit service and promoting transit-oriented design practices, reduces cross-county afternoon work trips by 18 percent and could increase transit use by as much as 45 percent. It would increase jobs within a half mile of rail stations from 40 percent in 1998 to 60 percent in 2020 and housing within a half mile of transit from 12 percent in 1998 to 33 percent in 2050.

The Council voted separately on two other large transportation projects that would be funded by state and federal dollars.

The Council reaffirmed its support for the Inner Purple Metro line, a predominantly at-grade light rail line that would connect Bethesda and Silver Spring to Langley Park, the University of Maryland, College Park, and New Carrollton. This is also supported by the state of Maryland and includes a spur connecting to the new Food and Drug Administration facility in White Oak. A hiker-biker trail will run parallel to the light rail line between Bethesda and Silver Spring.

The Outer Purple Line Hybrid would cost \$5.3 billion – more than four times the cost of the Inner – with ridership figures and vehicles taken off the road figures comparable to the Inner. It would in all likelihood never be funded by the federal government due to its poor cost-effectiveness.

The Council unanimously approved the Corridor Cities Transitway, a proposed light-rail line that would run down the I-270 corridor, connecting Clarksburg and Germantown with the Shady Grove Metro and the high-tech areas of Gaithersburg and Rockville.

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The full list of the Montgomery County projects approved today by the Council:

PROJECTS OVER \$500 MILLION

Inner Purple Line (including spur to FDA, the Georgetown Branch Trail, and the Metropolitan Branch Trail)
Corridor Cities Transitway (Shady Grove - Clarksburg)

STATE CONSTRUCTION PRIORITY LIST

Transit/HOV projects

I-270 (Shady Grove to Frederick Co.): add 2 HOV lanes
I-495 (Virginia to I-270 West Spur): add HOV lane each direction

Road projects

I-270 @ Watkins Mill Rd.: grade separation w/ramps
US 29 @ Fairland Rd./Musgrove Rd.: grade separation w/ramps
MD 28 /MD 198 (MD 97 to US 29): widen to 4 lanes
MD 97/Georgia Ave. @ Randolph Rd.: grade separation w/ramps
MD 97 @ MD 28: grade separation w/ramps
Brookeville Bypass (MD 97 relocation): new 2 lane roadway
MD 117/Clopper Road (Game Preserve Rd. to Q. Orchard Rd.): widen to 4 lanes
MD 124/Woodfield Road (Midcounty Hwy. to Warfield Rd.): widen to 6 lanes
MD 355/Rockville Pike @ Montrose Rd.: grade separation w/ramps
Rockville Town Center: grade separated interchanges

STATE PROJECT PLANNING PRIORITY LIST

Bus Priority/Transit Projects

Veirs Mill Road BRT (Wheaton - Rockville)
Georgia Avenue Busway
US 29 BRT (Burtonsville/Silver Spring)
University Blvd. BRT (Takoma/Langley - Wheaton)

New Link Capacity Projects

Western Corridor (Norbeck to Shady Grove): study several options
MD 586/Veirs Mill Rd. (Montrose Pkwy to Randolph Road): widen to 6 lanes
MD 586 (Montrose Pkwy to Twinbrook Pkwy): widen to 6 lanes
MD 182/Layhill Road (Longmead to MD 108): widen to MD 28 + safety imprvts.
MD 119/Great Seneca (MD 28 to Middlebrook Rd.): widen to 6 lanes divided
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MD 355/Frederick Ave. from Ridge Rd to A-305: relocate and widen
MD 117/Clopper Road (Little Seneca Park to MD 118): widen to 4 lanes divided
Eastern Connector: new 6 lane roadway from US 29 to I-95 and US 1

Commercial Revitalization Projects

MD 97/Georgia Ave. in Montgomery Hills
MD 355/Frederick Rd. in Gaithersburg
MD 193/University Blvd. in Langley Park
MD 198 from Old Columbia Pike in Burtonsville

Grade-Separated Interchanges

MD 355 Rockville Pike @ Nicholson Lane
MD 355 Rockville Pike @ Gude Drive
MD 119 Great Seneca Hwy @ Sam Eig Hwy

COUNTY ROAD PROJECTS

Burtonsville Access Road: new 2 lane road
Century Blvd./Crystal Rock Loop: new 4 lane road
Chapman Ave. (Maple Ave. to Marinelli Rd.): new 2 lane road
Citadel Ave. Ext. (Marinelli Rd. to Nicholson La.): new 2 lane road
Deer Park Bridge
Fairland Road (US 29 to P.G. Co. Line): widen from 2 to 3 lanes
Father Hurley Blvd. Ext. (Wisteria Dr. to MD118): new 4 lane road
Goshen Road So. (Gaithersburg limits to Warfield Rd.): widen to 4 lanes
Goshen Rd No. (north of Warfield Rd): spot safety improvements
Greencastle Road: widen to 4 lanes
I-4 over I-270 (Century Blvd - Milestone): new 4 lane bridge
Longdraft Road (MD 117 to MD 124): widen to 4 lanes
Midcounty Hwy. (Clarksburg Rd. to MD 355): new 2 lane road
Midcounty Hwy Ext. (Middlebrook Rd to MD 27): new 4-lane road
Middlebrook Rd (Midcounty Hwy. to MD 355): widen to 4 lanes
Montrose Pkwy (Tildenwood to Veirs Mill Rd.): new 4 lane road
Nebel St. Ext. (Chapman Ave. to Randolph Rd.): new 4 lane road
Observation Dr. (extend north to Stringtown Rd.): new 4 lane road
Quince Orchard Rd (south of MD 28): spot safety improvements
Rainbow Dr. Ext. (Rainbow Dr - Thompson Rd): new 2 lane road
Ripley District (Silver Spring CBD): circulation streets
Snouffer School Road (Goshen to Mooney Rd.): widen to 4 lanes
Stringtown Road (I-270 to MD 355): new 4-lane road
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Watkins Mill Road Ext. (MD 355 to MD 117): new 4-lane road
Woodglen Ave. (Marinelli Rd. to Nicholson La.): new 2 lane road

OTHER PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Transit programs

**Transit service*

Run all Metrorail trains to Shady Grove and Glenmont
More MARC service between Rockville & Silver Spring
Bus Frequency Improvements: 10 min. service on some routes
Express Bus on Norbeck Road Extended
Bus Service in new Beltway HOV lanes
Bus Service in new I-270 HOV lanes
Shuttle Bus - Federal Research Center to Metro Stations
Shady Grove Express (from MD 124 P&R to SG Metro)
Clarksburg - Boyds MARC Shuttle Bus Service

**Transit technology and infrastructure*

Improve bus technology: provide real-time bus information
Improve Ride On infrastructure
Make all bus stops accessible with sidewalks
Optimize traffic management systems for transit
Randolph Road BRT (Montrose Xsg - US 29)
Transit infrastructure maintenance and improvements

**Transit promotion*

More funding for Fare Share/Super Fare Share: double the budget
Improve marketing activities: double current budget

** Transit centers and parking*

Clarksburg Transit Center
Four Corners Transit Center
Glenmont Metro Garage
Norbeck Road P&R Lot Enhancements
Olney Transit Center
Takoma/Langleys Transit Center
White Oak Transit Center

Road programs

Continued ATMS improvements
Upgrade 20 existing bridges
Forward-fund portions of certain State projects
Fund critical data collection and travel monitoring
Improve failing intersections
Optimize traffic management systems for roads
Roadway infrastructure maintenance/improvement
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Pedestrian/Bikeway/Safety Improvements

Construct/upgrade pedestrian facilities

Enhance pedestrian/bicycle access to rail stations

Rapid deployment teams for incident management

Safety initiatives

24-hour operation of Transportation Management Center

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